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ABSTRACT

A survey of 300 secondary school English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) teachers in Turkey investigated their views on ESL teaching and curriculum, language attitudes, language learning, classroom practices, role perceptions, and views of language teaching as a profession. Demographic data show most were trained in English language teaching in Turkish universities. Teacher perceptions are reported concerning the major functions of their own English language use, objectives in teaching English, who determines the aims of the instruction and who should determine them, students' uses of English, degree to which the curriculum represents aims of English language instruction in Turkey, trends in academic standards, use of English as the medium of instruction, use of Turkish in the English language classroom, comparative features of English and Turkish, importance of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), instructional and learning theories, the best methods of learning a language, teaching methods commonly used, influences on teaching, the English language syllabus, use of teaching materials and activities, assessment issues, their own role in the classroom, characteristics of good teachers, needed changes in Turkish secondary education, sources of professional support, and the role of experience in teaching. (MSE)

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THE CULTURE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER IN AN EFL CONTEXT

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THE CULTURE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER IN AN EFL CONTEXT

ABSTRACT

This article reports on a study of the culture of teachers of English in an EFL context--Turkey. A questionnaire was administered to 300 Turkish teachers of English in order to identify their beliefs, goals, practices and judgments about their teaching and the teaching of English in Turkish secondary/High schools. A relationship was found between teachers' goals, values and beliefs, on the one hand, and their teaching experience and approach to language teaching on the other. Beyond their differences however, the teachers in this study were found to share a common ground as professionals, thinking and acting responsibly to help develop their students' learning of English.

THE CULTURE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER IN AN EFL CONTEXT

Introduction to the Study

The study of teaching can be approached from a number of dimensions. A focus on the objective facts involves examining the behaviors of teachers in classrooms in order to be able to make generalizations about such things as teacher discourse and teacher-learner interactions (Chaudron, 1988). A focus on the subjective dimensions of teaching on the other hand, involves examining teachers' goals, values, and beliefs about teaching and using such information to help explain teachers' classroom actions. In the last 10 years, research on teachers' beliefs has been seen as a valuable complement to traditional approaches to the study of teaching (Floden and Klinzing, 1990; Nespor, 1987). The information obtained from such studies clarifies the nature of teachers' knowledge and belief systems, their views as to what constitutes good teaching, and their views of the systems in which they work and their role within it: such beliefs and values serve as a background to much of the teachers' decision-making and classroom action and hence constitute the "**culture**" of teaching (Brousseau, Book & Byers, 1988; Feiman-Nemser and Floden, 1986).

Although research on teachers' beliefs has been seen as a valuable complement to traditional approaches to the study of teaching, still very little research exist on the culture of teachers in EFL contexts.

This article reports the results of a survey on the culture of teachers of English in Turkey. A questionnaire was administered to a group of three hundred Turkish teachers in order to

identify their beliefs, goals, practices and judgments about their teaching and the teaching of English in Turkish secondary and high schools. Results of the study are analyzed in terms of teachers' view of the EFL curriculum, of language and language teaching, classroom practices, the role of teachers, and teachers' view of their profession. The role of experience and training in determining attitudes, choice of teaching methods, and teachers' sense of professionalism are also discussed.

Teachers' Belief Systems

"Teachers' belief systems are founded on the goals, values, and beliefs teachers hold in relation to the content and process of teaching, and their understanding of the systems in which they work and their roles within it. These beliefs and values serve as the background to much of the teachers' decision making and action, and hence constitute what has been termed the "culture of teaching."(Richards & Lockhart, 1994:30)

Teaching cultures are embodied in the work-related beliefs and knowledge teachers share- beliefs about appropriate ways of acting on the job and rewarding aspects of teaching, and knowledge that enables teachers to do their work. (Feiman-Nemser & Floden 1986:508)

Research on the teachers' belief systems suggests that their beliefs are derived from a number of different sources (Kindsvatter, Willen, and Ishler, 1988), for example; their own experience as language learners, experience of what works best, established practice, personality factors, educationally based or research-based principles, principles derived from an approach or method. (Richards & Lockhart, 1994)

Several approaches to identifying teachers' beliefs and the culture of teaching have been employed (Shavelson and Stern, 1981). Analysis of teachers' conversations about their work is one source of information. Another is to video-record classroom actions with follow-up

stimulated recall interviews in which teachers comment on what they did and why. A third approach is through the use of interviews and questionnaires, which was the one used in this study. In each approach, data is obtained from which inferences must be made about the core components of the teacher's belief system or culture.

English and English Teaching in Turkey

English occupies a unique role in Turkey. Turkey in the 1990s is a country clearly involved in world affairs. As an economically and technologically developing and increasingly culturally diverse nation, Turkey's contacts with foreign nations and foreign people have reached a peak and its need for an effective means of international communication is ever present. In order for Turkish businessmen, scientists, educators, and artists to stay in communication with their colleagues abroad, an ability to read, speak, understand, and write in English is usually required. Turkish students more than any of the other previously mentioned groups require knowledge of English to advance in their studies. In general, Turkish people realize that there is a need to know English in order to carry out their businesses, to explain Turkish culture, Turkish ways of thinking, and national positions on countless important issues. National goals of "internationalizing" both the educational system and the domestic economy also heighten the importance of knowing the premier international language, which is English. To Turkish people, an ability to use English has become synonymous with achievement in business, academic life, and the arts. In short, learning English has become an explicit (though an elusive) national goal. English is now considered the key to success in Turkey.

English teaching is a wide-ranging enterprise in Turkey today, with all secondary school

and university students and countless other non-academic individuals actively involved in its study.

Secondary schools in which various programs are followed can mainly be grouped as follows:

1. Standard Government Schools: English curriculum and materials of these schools are controlled by the Turkish Ministry of Education. The syllabus is set in accordance with textbooks written by a commission approved by the Ministry of Education, and teachers have to follow it strictly. Therefore, in these schools, language teaching materials and methodology tend to be identical throughout the country. The purpose of English lessons is to equip students with a basic knowledge of English.

2. Government Super Schools: These high schools are new compared to others. The number of hours of English has been increased in classes 1-3. These schools also include a preparation year of approximately twenty-seven hours of English a week. In addition, each school is free to choose its own materials and methodology. These schools seem to have been created to answer the need for more language hours in state schools without being as costly as schools in the private sector.

3. English-Medium Government Schools: These schools are run according to different regulations. Students wishing to be enrolled in these schools have to take a very competitive entry exam. The syllabus, which is followed, has more hours of English. Teachers also have more flexibility and autonomy when compared with standard state schools. They can choose their materials and their methodology, which are not found in state schools. Additionally, the subjects of science and mathematics are taught in English.

4. Private schools: These schools follow the same syllabus and regulations as the state English-medium schools. They are also under the control and the supervision of the Ministry of Education. The main difference is related to the costs of enrollment. Better facilities are offered to students who are sometimes placed in these schools according to their scores on an entry test, which is administered separately from the entry test for state schools. The syllabus set by the Ministry of Education has to be covered, but each school has freedom in their choice of textbooks.

English is also learned outside the traditional educational system, with numerous private language courses and even government offices and private businesses providing English instruction. Would-be learners are also able to study English with the help of lessons broadcast over the national radio and television network. These broadcasts enable hundreds of thousands of Turkish people to further their study of English.

English teachers in the secondary schools come from very different sources with different training and experience. They may be (a) graduates but not necessarily English graduates with or without a teaching certificate. These teachers are graduates of English medium universities like Middle East Technical University, (b) graduates of English Language Teaching Departments, (c) graduates of English Language and Literature Departments, (d) graduates of English Language and Culture Departments, (e) graduates of American Culture and Literature, (f) graduates of English Language and Culture. Although generally having a high degree of professional commitment, along with others in the teaching profession in Turkey they must contend with large classes (up to 60 students), heavy teaching and administrative load (an average of 20 class periods a week) and limited availability of resources. Due to the increased demand for English-speaking

graduates in the work place, fewer English graduates are entering the teaching profession, which is an issue of some concern to the education authorities.

English teachers, however, are recognized as playing a vital role in successfully implementing Turkey's educational policies. The ways in which teachers see their role, attitudes and values they subscribe to, and how they characterize their classroom practices, form the focus of the present study.

Design of the study

In order to identify the beliefs and attitudes of English teachers about their work, Richards et.als' 1992 study consisting two forms was adapted. Both forms were first tried out with a small group of teachers, and then they were revised and piloted with 10 subjects. Form A contained 31 items whereas form B contained 30 items, covering the same five areas: Teachers' view of the EFL curriculum; their attitudes towards English and Turkish and their beliefs about foreign language learning and teaching; the classroom practices and procedures they employ; how they see their role as teachers; their views of language teaching as a profession.. Both forms were randomly distributed to a sample of 400 teachers.

Two hundred fifty of the questionnaires were sent via post with self-stamped envelopes and the rest was distributed in two local seminars organized by the Ministry of Education in Ankara and Giresun in 1996. Three hundred teachers (66% female and 34% male) responded the questionnaire with a sixty-six percent response rate. Sixty-eight percent of the teachers were ELT graduates from Turkish universities, seventeen percent were graduates of English language and literature, and fifteen percent were graduates of different faculties of English medium universities,

mainly Middle East Technical University. Of the teachers fifty-four percent were between the ages 31-40, thirty-one percent between 22-30, and fifteen percent were between 41-50. The average year of experience in teaching English was ten. Ninety-one percent of the respondents were teachers and the rest were chairpersons.

The average number of teaching hours teachers had was twenty. Seventy-six percent of the participants were teaching at Anatolian High schools, thirteen percent were teaching at Government standard schools, and eleven percent was teaching at Government super schools.

The teachers who completed the questionnaire were from various parts of the country and various schools forming a sound sample of the population and on average, they had 9.7 years of teaching experience.

Results

The teachers' responses will be discussed according to the five main areas included in the questionnaire. The items included in the questionnaire assumed different forms according to what was asked. Some items offered teachers a list of options to choose from; others required teachers to evaluate items on a Likert scale. At the end of each item, space was provided for teachers to state their personal view. For convenience of presentation, most of the items in the questionnaire have been reformulated below as questions. The discussion of teachers' responses may, however, be in terms of percentages or a ranking of the options.

For the purpose of statistical analysis, it was found useful in this study to classify teachers who taught six or more years as experienced teachers. In this article, only descriptive statistics followed by a short analysis of the role of experience in English language teaching are reported.

(i)Teachers' view of the EFL curriculum

Fourteen items in the two forms of the questionnaire focused on the use of English, aims and objectives of English language teaching, standards and the medium of instruction in Turkey.

The major functions of English identified were: for business communications (93%), to link Turkey to other parts of the world (68%), and a common language for people speaking different languages in the world (51%)[1]. The advantages of being able to use English were cited as: for better job opportunities (93%), for increasing cultural awareness (30%), for access to higher education (23%).

The aims identified for teaching English in Turkey were: to pass examinations (61%), to pursue further studies (53%), and to communicate effectively with native speakers of English (45%). Studying in English in order to appreciate western culture and values was not ranked highly (19%), indicating an instrumental rather than cultural value attributed to English.

The responses for who determines the aims of English language teaching were; the Government (87%), the Curriculum Development Committee for the English Language in the Ministry of Education (83%), and the teachers (75 %) were identified as determining the aims of English language teaching. However, seventy percent of the teachers felt that ideally teachers should determine the aims of the curriculum, while sixty-nine percent and sixty percent respectively thought that the students themselves and the Curriculum Development Committee for the English Language in the Ministry of Education should determine the aims.

[1]Some items of the questionnaire presented teachers with a list of options from which they were asked to choose a maximum of three options that best describe their views. The percentages reported here indicate the proportion of teachers who chose each option. Since teachers could select more than one option, the percentages of the options add up to more than 100% for these items.

The reasons for which students study English differ slightly than those cited in question 3: to prepare themselves for further study (49%), to get a good job (34%), and to satisfy school requirements (32%) for high school students. Reasons given for secondary school students are to satisfy school requirements (44%), to satisfy the demand of their parents (40%), and to prepare themselves for further studies (37%).

Only thirty-one percent of the teachers thought the school syllabus to a large appropriately represents the aims of English language teaching in Turkey. Teachers were regarded as ultimately determining the objectives of lessons (58%) rather than textbook writers (19%).

Asked about the standard of English of secondary school students in Turkey over the past several years, forty-nine percent felt that the students' listening and speaking skills have improved a little. Only eleven percent thinks that the students' skills in these areas have not changed. Fifty percent think that the students' skills in reading and writing have improved a little too. It is good to see the students'' four skills haven't deteriorated.

Regarding the use of English as the medium of instruction, thirty-six percent of the teachers indicate that using English as the medium of instruction improves their English. Twenty-four percent of the teachers believe that it is a sound educational practice, and only nineteen percent believe that having English as the medium of instruction places an unnecessary burden on most students.

On the use of English and Turkish in the classroom, sixty-five percent think that it is better to use English only, and Turkish only when needed. Seventeen percent think that it is better to use English only, and ten percent think that it is acceptable to use Turkish words within English sentences. On the other hand, only six percent think that it is all right to use English words within

Turkish sentences. With respect to the language policy appropriate for Turkey, seventy-two percent of the teachers think that both Turkish and English should be emphasized.

(ii) Teachers' view of language and language teaching

Section 2 of the questionnaire sought to identify the teachers' attitudes towards the English and Turkish languages and their beliefs about foreign language teaching.

In describing their perception of English, the following views were reported: a language with a rich vocabulary (63%), an important international language (61%), and a language with great flexibility (26%).

In comparing English and Turkish most agreed that English has a larger vocabulary (78%), Sixty-two percent agreed that English is more flexible in communication, fifty-one percent agreed that English has more idioms, and fifty percent of the teachers expressed an opinion felt that English has more grammar rules than Turkish. Thirty-five percent think that English is easier to learn at first, but just as difficult to learn at a larger stage, thirty-two percent believe that compared to Turkish, English is neither easier nor difficult to learn, twenty-seven percent think that English is easier to learn than Turkish while six percent think that English is more difficult to learn.

The teachers ranked the importance of the four skills at both secondary and high schools as: speaking, listening, reading, and writing[2].

Teachers were given a number of theories to evaluate, and the theories which teachers judged to be most useful to them were: theories of how foreign language learners learn a

[2]Percentages are not reported for those questions where teachers were asked to rate items on a five-point Likert scale.

language, the psychology of learning, theories about different teaching methods, theories which help develop classroom practices, theories of how children learn their first language, and, the grammatical theories of language. The kinds of research which teachers thought to be useful was reported as: research into the effectiveness of teaching materials, comparing the effectiveness of different teaching methods, the effect of teacher personality on teaching, learning strategies, remedial teaching, and the effects of streaming students.

When asked what they thought was the best way to learn a language, the following suggestions were reported: learners should interact with native speakers of the language (77%), practice speaking the language (55%), and expose themselves to the language as far as possible (45%). Strategies which most of the teachers did not think were helpful were studying the rules of the language (7%), and repeating and memorizing chunks of the language (6%).

The teaching methods which teachers most frequently use in their classes were identified as a functional or communicative approach (56%), a grammar-based approach (25%), and an eclectic approach geared to meeting the requirements of examinations (13%).

The factors which most influence teachers in their teaching were reported as teacher training/development courses (58%), seminars organized for teachers (26%), self-reflection (21%), and past experience as a language learner (18%).

(iii) Teachers' view of classroom practices

Section 3 of the questionnaire asked a number of questions concerning classroom practices and procedures. These questions fell into four categories: questions concerning the English language syllabus, the use of teaching materials and activities, their attitudes towards the

use of Turkish in their classes, and their views on assessment.

Teachers felt that the main criteria for including items in the Syllabus should be the frequency of use in everyday English (93%). Items that will be tested in examinations were also judged to be important (79%) as well as those are commonly found in English newspapers and magazines (62%).

When asked how often they consulted the syllabus, however, nearly half reported that they rarely (31%) or never (18%) consulted it. Only nineteen percent claimed that they consulted it more than once or twice every school term. Those who do consult the syllabus report they use it mainly as a guide to the selection of teaching materials (50%) and to teaching methods (15%). Only thirteen percent describe it as a definite guide to English language teaching in Turkey.

In terms of changes they would like to see in the syllabus, seventy-seven percent of the teachers think that the aims of English language teaching specified in the Syllabus should be modified. Sixty-three percent of the teachers think that the syllabus should be made more flexible for use with mixed ability groups, and fifty-one percent feel more detailed descriptions of the teaching/learning items should be included. Only two percent feel that the Syllabus is satisfactory and no changes are needed.

As for the teachers' use of teaching materials and classroom activities. The teachers reported that their primary teaching resources are the textbook, supplementary materials, personal lesson plans, and audio-tapes. The primary functions of the textbook are seen as to provide a structured language program for teachers to follow (69%), to provide practice activities (45%), and to provide language models (42%). More than half of the teachers do not rely on a single textbook (55%), teachers using a separate text for teaching listening comprehension form (53%),

and reading practice (66%). Of the teachers fifty-six percent inform that they do not use a separate text neither for writing nor reading activities. Forty-eight percent make a significant use of exercises and materials which they develop themselves.

Ninety-six percent of the teachers are familiar with preparing lesson plans. However, the frequency of use of lesson plans varies: Forty percent use them before every class, thirty-six percent a few times a week, and fourteen percent once a while whereas three percent not since their last teacher training course. For many teachers (49%) lesson plans consist of a few rough notes. Only twenty-eight percent use a complete lesson plan specifying every item to be taught.

The classroom activities the teachers most frequently employ in their teaching were ranked as: (1) doing reading and writing exercises from the textbook, (2) role play, (3) pair or group work tasks, (4) pronunciation drills, (5) projects, (6) written grammar exercises, (7) composition, and (8) games.

When teachers were asked questions concerning the use of Turkish in their teaching many of the teachers (59%) felt that Turkish can be used whenever necessary to ensure understanding. Thirty-one percent felt that Turkish can be used to explain difficult vocabulary items. Only eight percent believe that teachers should never use Turkish in English classes.

When describing how they make use of Turkish in an English class, fifty-two percent reported that they use Turkish in order to simplify the explanation of difficult English vocabulary items. Nineteen percent use Turkish sometimes to give instructions for classroom activities and exercises. Thirteen percent use Turkish sometimes to explain grammatical structures, while eight switch back and forth in Turkish and English as necessary and only seven percent claim that they never use any Turkish in English classes.

Teachers were also asked to address on assessment where they were somewhat divided concerning the basic functions of tests in school. Twenty-three percent felt that the function of tests is to assess students' learning difficulties. Twenty-two percent think that tests serve to direct students' learning while twenty percent believe tests are used to motivate students. Fifteen percent and thirteen percent of the teachers respectively feel that basically tests are to identify areas for re-teaching and to give feedback to teachers.

In giving feedback to students on their performance on assignments, the following objectives were reported: to encourage students to work harder (67%), to provide a model of how the assignment should be done (42%), to give guidelines for improvement (39%). Fifty-one percent of the teachers indicated their teaching was to some extent determined by tests and examinations.

(iv)Teachers' view of their role

Section 4 of the questionnaire addressed how teachers view their role in the education system.

Teachers listed the following qualities as characteristics of good teachers: they are able to motivate students (72%), they are creative (51%), they are well organized (21%), they are proficient in English (17%), and they are willing to experiment and learn (16%).

Teachers saw their main roles in the classroom as (1) to provide a model of correct language usage, (2) to help learners discover the rules and the principles about language, (3) to provide useful learning experiences, (4) to make sure learners do what they are supposed to do during the activities.

When asked what they saw their main role to be an English teacher, the following functions were identified: to help students discover effective approaches to learning (38%), to pass on knowledge and skills to students (37%), and modifying teaching approaches to meet students' needs (14%).

Teachers felt that Turkish teachers trained in English language teaching would make the best English teachers in Turkey (42%), and thirty percent believed that native speakers of English trained in English language teaching would be suitable. Only four percent thought Turkish teachers trained in English language and literature would make the best teachers.

Half of the teachers (51%) felt that they are free to some extent to make changes in their approach to teaching. Forty-seven percent of the teachers felt that they are able to bring about changes in students' learning outcomes to a large extent. Only six percent felt that they could make a difference to no extent.

The kinds of learners the teachers felt did best in their classes were those who are active and speak out (69%), who are not afraid of making mistakes (49%), who follow their teachers' instructions (32%), and those who were motivated (18%).

The kinds of activities outside the classroom which the teachers thought of most benefit to them were attending seminars, teacher workshops, etc. (67%), reading teacher magazines and related information about the field (46%), and developing supplementary materials (42%).

(v) Teachers' view of their profession

The final section of the questionnaire included questions on teachers' view of English language teaching as profession.

Concerning evaluation of teaching, eighty percent felt that the best way to evaluate the teaching is asking students to fill in questionnaires anonymously. Other indicators that were considered valuable were: students' achievement in tests and examinations (66%), using own judgment (60%). Only eighteen percent would invite colleagues to observe their classes and even fewer six percent would request school inspectors to give an evaluation of their teaching.

The main difficulties teachers identified in teaching English were (1) students have no opportunity to use the language, (2) large classes, (3) not enough time, (4) too much examination pressure, and (5) not enough resources/facilities for teachers.

The most rewarding aspect of English language teaching identified by teachers was seeing students make progress (47%), job satisfaction (28%), and self-improvement (11%). Respect from the community (3%) and long holidays (2%) were the least cited ones of the rewards of teaching respectively.

The teachers identified the following changes they would like to see in both secondary and high schools in Turkey: (1) reducing the size of classes, (2) providing more resources and facilities, (3) having a better curriculum.

Teachers saw their main sources of support coming from (1) their colleagues, and (2) the English department chairperson. Teachers thought that the statements which best describe the way they are supported in their professional development are (1) teachers are provided with opportunities for professional development, (2) teachers are supported by the local authorities when they apply for teacher education programs. Few teachers supported the statement that teachers are supported by professional organizations.

The teachers felt that the statements which most accurately describe their status as English

teachers in Turkey were: (1) they are expected to be experts on English, (2) they are not seen to be as important as they should be, (3) their job is a good one for university graduates.

The skills which were felt to be most important for English language teachers identified as (1) a good understanding of how a foreign language is learned, (2) reading widely to keep up with the language and the area of ELT, (3) special skills and training in English language teaching, (4) superior command of the English language.

Activities that teachers felt could improve their teaching practice were (1) discussing problems of teaching with other teachers, (2) team work/team teaching, (3) observing another teacher's classes, (4) starting a school based curriculum, and consulting reference materials.

Given the opportunity to take part in professional development activities, the following priorities were identified: (1) taking an advanced degree course in ELT in an English speaking country (82%), and attending workshops and in-service courses (13%).

Teachers thought that English language teaching in turkey can be improved by improving the English language proficiency of teachers of English (54%), through better training programs (51%), by having smaller classes (29%), and through more use of technology (21%).

The role of experience

In order to permit some broader generalizations, the teachers' responses were also examined to find out the role experience played in determining their perceptions, to characterize what approaches to teaching they appear to follow, and to describe their perception of their role as professionals. Teachers more than 5 years of teaching were accepted as experienced.

Experienced teachers differ from inexperienced teachers in three areas: their views of the

aims and approach of English language teaching in Turkey; some aspects of their classroom practice; and their views of professional support and professional development.

Experienced teachers are more aware of the utilitarian aims of language teaching. They are more likely to think that the aims of English language teaching in Turkey are to enable students to pass examinations.

Compared with the experienced teachers, inexperienced are more likely to think that grammatical theories of language are useful to language teaching. When asked about the relative importance of the four skills, inexperienced teachers are more likely to think that listening is a more important skill in secondary and speaking is a more important skill in high schools.

The teachers' views are reflected in their declared preferences when asked about their classroom practice. Inexperienced teachers tend to require students doing reading/writing exercises in the book more often. They tend to use more of the textbooks but presumably stay within the written medium. In contrast experienced teachers seem to go beyond the written medium more often, in the use of audio and videotapes, oral exercises and pronunciation.

Experience also influences how they view the difficulties they face. Perhaps because the experienced teachers are more confident of themselves, they see too much examination pressure and poor student motivation for the students as less serious problems than their less experienced colleagues do.

Another difference is seen in their views of the use of Turkish in English lessons. Experienced teachers are more likely to use Turkish sometimes to simplify the explanation of difficult English vocabulary, while inexperienced teachers report that they tend to switch back and forth between Turkish and English whenever necessary.

When asked what can improve language teaching in Turkey; inexperienced teachers are more likely to favor to have better training programs whereas experienced teachers are more likely to see the need for having smaller classes

Professionalism and teacher beliefs

Since socio-economic conditions were not so good for teachers, they believe that they are not seen as important as they should be in Turkey. However, teachers' views and actions reflect their belief that language teaching is a profession and teachers are professionals. Therefore, they try to engage in a variety of professional activities as much as their economical welfare permits. They believe that developing supplementary materials, reading teacher magazines and related information about the field, and attending seminars and teacher workshops would benefit them most as teachers of English. They favor discussing problems of teaching with other teachers and they believe the best teachers are those with a good understanding of how a foreign language is learned. They believe that their job is a good one for university graduates.

The teachers' responses reveal that they are willing to assume professional responsibilities. They believe that teachers should play a part in shaping the aims of the curriculum and objectives of lessons are ultimately determined by them. They feel that they can take charge of their teaching and improve the learning outcomes of their students.

As a group, they share a view towards the language that they teach, emphasizing the importance of the language for career, education and cultural awareness. They see one of their main roles as helping their students discover effective approaches to learning.

Teachers also share a view about the best way to learn a language--interacting with native speakers of the language as much as possible. Repeating and memorizing chunks of language are

least favored. They feel that students need to be motivated in order to maximize learning. They rely on professional tools, textbooks and supplementary materials. They indicate that they are familiar with the preparation of lesson plans.

As professionals, teachers are concerned about their students. This can be seen in several ways: (1) they find it most rewarding to see students make progress, (2) they see one of their main roles as helping students discover effective approaches to learning, and (3) they provide the kind of feedback that encourages their students to work harder.

As language teachers, the difficulties faced by teachers are related to (1) students' little opportunity to use the language, (2) large classes, (3) not enough time and resources.

Conclusion

To the best of my knowledge this study is the first and the only one in its kind in the country. The study has attempted to identify the beliefs and attitudes of Turkish teachers of English towards teaching of English and shown that patterns of teachers' views and behavior can be identified. These are viewed as constituting the culture of teaching for this group of teachers. The results of this survey present only a static and descriptive view of teacher beliefs. The extent to which teacher beliefs are variable over time, from person to person, and setting to setting needs to be explored. The extent to which the beliefs reported here have been influenced by previous experiences including the curricular and instructional practices at teacher education programs teachers have encountered is unclear. And although this research originally sought simply to catalogue and report the beliefs about English and English teaching of a group of three hundred teachers, we should not ignore some of the specific beliefs these teachers hold. A relationship was

found between teachers' goals, values and beliefs, on the one hand, and their teaching experience, training, and approach to language teaching on the other. Beyond their differences however, the teachers in this study were found to share a common ground as professionals, thinking and acting responsibly to help develop their students' learning of English. Although a questionnaire study such as this is only able to explore teachers' expressions of their ideas, values, and goals, rather than determine how or whether they put these into practice in actual teaching, the study provides valuable information to assist developing teacher education and in-service training programs and activities along with valuable information for publishing companies and those who want to seek career in EFL in Turkey.

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